

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL  
19 November 1986

SAN DIEGO

A CIA spokesman Wednesday denied a published report claiming the intelligence agency listened in on the conversations of several high-ranking Mexican officials in order to find evidence of corruption.

The San Diego Union reported Wednesday that the CIA listened to the calls of Mexican officials without their knowledge in order to find evidence of corruption involving drug dealers.

Information collected was turned over to the Justice Department and Drug Enforcement Administration for use as they saw fit, The Union said.

In a statement issued in Washington, CIA spokesman George Lauder said the newspaper's story was false and misleading.

'The CIA doesn't normally comment on stories concerning alleged CIA activities,' the statement said. 'We are making an exception in this case because The San Diego Union's story is false and misleads the American public. 'The suggestion that the CIA has been targeting Mexican officials in connection with narcotics trafficking is false.'

The newspaper said one source believed the wiretaps were on the phones of the high-ranking Mexican officials. Another source said the taps were on the phone of a U.S. citizen who lived in Mexico City and that the government officials were heard talking on the lines. The unidentified American had contacts with drug traffickers and government officials.

The Union said it was not known if the operation was continuing.

An anonymous source quoted by The Union said some of the taped conversations were quite candid.

'There is no pretense, no subtlety,' the source said. 'They just say, 'Bring 20 kilos here by tomorrow . . .' No cute talk like in the United States where people might say, 'How many oranges do you want?''

The investigation grew out of a probe into the murder of DEA Agent Enrique Camarena in Guadalajara, Mexico, last year. There were allegations that Mexican law enforcement and government officials were cooperating with the drug traffickers who allegedly tortured Camarena to death.

The unidentified sources told The Union that the DEA agreed to give the CIA a list of its informants in exchange for whatever drug-related information the agency came up with in foreign countries.